

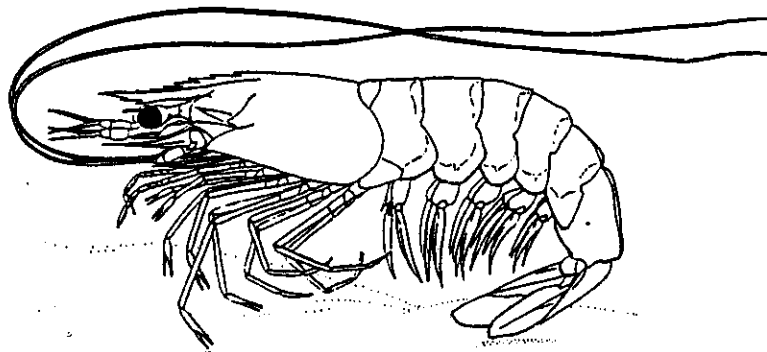


Louisiana State University  
**Agricultural Center**  
Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service

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Jefferson Parish Office  
1855 Ames Blvd.  
Marrero, LA 70072  
(504) 349-5644  
Fax: (504) 349-8817

## SEA GRANT PROGRAM



### LAGNIAPPE

#### NEW FISHERIES REPORTING SYSTEM COMING

Recent discussions with David Lavergne of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) indicate a new reporting system is coming. Beginning January 1, 1999, a trip ticket system will be used to record commercial fisheries landings. It will likely replace the monthly report now required of dealers. The system will record each commercial fishing trip resulting in a sale of fish. The ticket will include much more than the quantity and species sold. Additional possible information would be general location of the catch, value, gear used, etc. The purpose of the new approach to documenting commercial fishery activity is to have better data for managers. Environmental and storm damage to fisheries will be easier to estimate for affected areas.

Commercial fishermen and first buyers will soon be exposed to the new system. If your business is in either of these categories, you should contribute your advice to those developing the system. There will be opportunities to do this during 1998. You can periodically check with Lavergne at LDWF in Baton Rouge as the deadline approaches. Another means is to participate in the pilot program LDWF will conduct later in 1998.

The development of a good trip ticket system can improve the image of the seafood industry. A system with more geographic detail describing catch and other details all reported and processed more quickly will benefit everyone involved.

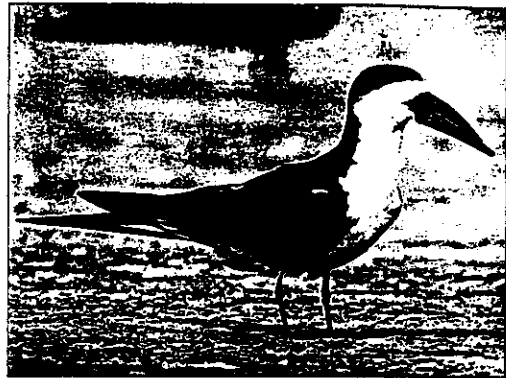
Source: Ken Roberts in *Crawfishnews*. February, 1998. LSU Agricultural Center.

## **SURF FISHERMEN AND SEABIRDS**

One of the most enjoyable and impressive sights for surf fishermen, and beach campers, swimmers, and picnickers are the throngs of seabirds on Louisiana beaches. When a person sees the large numbers of these birds, it is easy to forget how sensitive their nesting sites are to human disturbance.

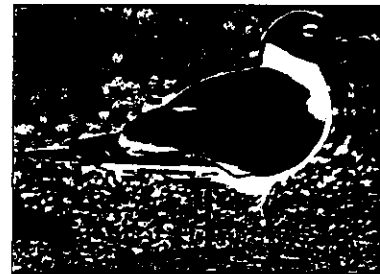
In addition to shorebirds such as sandpipers and willets, and wading birds such as egrets and herons, seabirds such as gulls and terns are very common on our beaches. Six species of seabirds nest on the state's beaches: black skimmers, least terns, laughing gulls, royal terns, sandwich terns, and caspian terns.

Black skimmers are an elegant black and white bird with a large beak. They commonly fly just above the surface of the water with only their lower bill skimming its surface to feed on small fish and occasionally shrimp. Nationally, the black skimmer population is stable, but the Louisiana population is declining. This is significant because 44% of all black skimmers nest in Louisiana. In 1994, it nested at only 54% of the sites on the central Louisiana coast that it used in 1983. Its preferred nesting areas are areas where gulf waves have recently swept over barrier islands and beaches clearing off the vegetation (washovers).



Least terns are our smallest seabird. Least terns are listed as endangered, but the listing applies to the population found along rivers in the interior of the state, not the coastal population. Least terns, like black skimmers, prefer nesting on beach washovers, but will also nest on man-made dredge spoil islands, vacant coastal house lots, and even airports. They feed on small fish and shellfish in shallow water. While their population is stable in Louisiana, it is increasing in the rest of the Gulf Coast.

In spite of being the most common seabird on our coast, laughing gull populations are decreasing on the central Louisiana coast between the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers. Their population is stable elsewhere in the state and the Gulf Coast. This relatively large bird is the one that fishermen keep an eye out for. Numbers

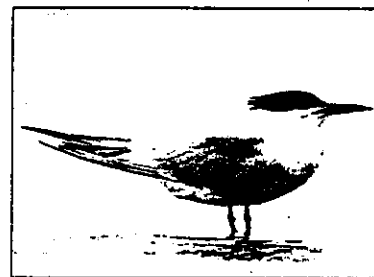


of them diving in an area usually indicate a school of feeding fish. Barrier islands and beaches are vital to these birds for nesting, where they prefer to nest in sand dunes, although temporary breeding colonies may be established on marsh islands. This versatile bird eats small crabs, surface fish, shrimp, discarded fishing bycatch, eggs of other seabirds and even garbage. It will beg for food from humans and will even travel inland to eat earthworms in freshly plowed fields.



The royal tern is the second most common seabird in Louisiana. Its breeding population is increasing in Louisiana and is stable on the whole Gulf Coast. Its food consists of small fish and shellfish and it also nests on barrier beaches and dredge spoil islands in areas where few plants exist. It is very sensitive to human disturbance of its nesting colonies.

Sandwich tern populations are increasing in Louisiana, the Gulf Coast, and the nation. Of the national population of this bird, 77% breed in Louisiana, however, they breed only in a few colonies. Sandwich terns nest on open barrier beaches and spoil islands. Like the royal tern, its nesting colonies are very sensitive to human disturbance. They feed on small mullet, menhaden, anchovies, shrimp, squid and swimming worms.



The last beach-nesting seabird in Louisiana, the caspian tern, is the least common, although it is increasing. In 1990, it was estimated that only 670 of these birds nested in Louisiana. Although it nests on barrier beaches, it prefers feeding in marshes where it mainly eats small fish that it pirates from smaller seabirds.

Several studies have been made of nesting seabirds and each points to the loss of barrier beach habitat and human disturbance of colonies as the biggest threats to these birds' future. Human disturbance can be mild and unintentional (such as walking near a nesting site), or severe as in the destruction of nests, eggs, and newly hatched birds by beach-goers' vehicles, pets, or by the people themselves.

It has been recommended that vehicle access to beaches such as Fourchon Beach be limited to protect seabird colonies. A 1991 study recommended posting areas for no activity within 220 yards of any seabird colony as shown on the next page.

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>POSTING TIME PERIOD</u>
Black Skimmer	May 1 to September 16
Least Tern	April 15 to September 16
Laughing Gull	April 1 to August 1
Royal Tern	April 15 to September 16
Sandwich Tern	April 15 to September 16
Caspian Tern	April 15 to September 16

Such action could affect surf fishermen, whether they use vehicles to drive to the beach and fish, or arrive by boat and camp. Therefore, surf fishermen should follow several precautions.

- 1) Be alert! Seabird colonies are fairly easy to spot. The birds will be sitting, spaced at fairly regular intervals above the high tide mark. Resting (but not nesting) seabirds are usually in a tight group, often standing, and usually near the water line.
- 2) Don't set up camp or park your vehicle near or in a seabird colony. This will prevent the birds from tending their nests. Prolonged sun exposure will kill their eggs and newly hatched birds.
- 3) Walk as far as possible around a nesting colony rather than through it. While young seabirds can run relatively well a short time after hatching, repeated visits by curious humans can stress these young birds and keep the adults from tending them or their nests. When the adults are not near their nests, laughing gulls will also attack and eat the young and eggs of other seabird species.
- 4) If you bring pets, keep them out of the area of a nesting colony. One dog or cat can be more destructive than many humans.

Sources: *Status, Trends, and Probable Causes of Change in Living Resources in the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuarine System*. Publication #21. Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program. 1995. *Atlas and Census of Wading Bird and Seabird Nesting Colonies in Louisiana 1990*. R. P. Martin and G. D. Lester. Special Publication 3. Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. 1991. *Stokes Field Guide to Birds*. Donald and Lillian Stokes. Little Brown and Company. 1996

## **NEW NONRESIDENT FISHING LICENSE**

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission took action at its April 2, 1998 meeting to ratify a rule that allows **nonresidents** to purchase a three-day basic (freshwater) recreational fishing license for a fee of \$10. Nonresidents may also purchase a three-day recreational saltwater license for a fee of \$15. Both licenses shall be valid for

three consecutive days including the day of issue. These fees will be effective July 1, 1998.

## **ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR DISPLACED GILLNETTERS AMENDED**

In April the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries amended the rules of the Commercial Fishermen's Assistance Program. This program was created as part of the Louisiana Marine Resources Conservation Act of 1995 which severely restricted the use of gill nets in saltwater.

Under this program the Louisiana Department of Labor will, until July 1, 2000, provide economic assistance for displaced gillnet fishermen for training in approved training programs and for taking courses at state colleges and universities. This includes vocational-technical schools that train craftsmen such as welders and machinists.

To qualify for assistance, commercial fishermen must meet several requirements. Applicants must have purchased a saltwater gill net license in at least two of the years 1993, 1994 and 1995. In addition, applicants must show that over half of their earned income was derived from legal capture and sale of seafood species in those same years. Applicants must have suffered a loss of income due to the enactment of the 1995 Louisiana Marine Resource Conservation Act. Applicants must provide proof that they were bona fide residents of Louisiana on June 30, 1995. Applications for assistance must be submitted before October 1, 1998.

The LDWF will review the submitted tax returns and determine an applicant's income eligibility. Proof of loss of income will be determined by comparing average earned income from sale of seafood for two of the years 1993, 1994 and 1995 and the earned income for tax years 1996 or 1997. Proof of such income must be provided in the form of federal income tax returns.

Commercial fishermen who receive economic assistance under the program will be disqualified from receiving any mullet license permit.

Fishermen interested in applying for the program should call Janis Landry with the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries at (504) 765-2881.

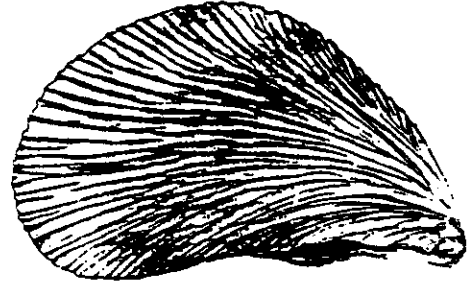
## **MUSSELS, MUSSELS, MUSSELS**

The word "mussel" may refer to what is often called a freshwater clam. More often in Louisiana, mussel refers to one of two other species, the introduced zebra mussel, *Dreissena polymorpha*, and the native brackish water hooked mussel, *Ishadium recurvum*, commonly found growing on oysters.

Zebra Mussel



Hooked Mussel



### Zebra Mussels

Zebra mussels are small triangular-shaped mollusks which are distant relatives of clams and oysters. Their shell has very noticeable black and white stripes that give them their name. They attach to hard surfaces with tough string-like byssal threads.

Since being accidentally introduced into the Great Lakes in the northern United States they have spread throughout all the rivers in the Mississippi drainage. In Louisiana they are common in both the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers and the Intracoastal Waterway.

According to Dr. Bruce Thompson of the LSU Coastal Fisheries Institute, in all three areas, zebra mussels attach to most any hard surface from rock rip-rap to boat and barge hulls. Thompson, who is Louisiana's resident field expert on zebra mussels, says that they are also found in virtually every industrial plant's freshwater intake pipes along the Mississippi River.

Research has shown that besides blocking water flow in intake pipes, that heavy infestations of zebra mussels can cause metal corrosion by concentrating iron-oxidizing and sulfate-reducing bacteria. While these problems are well-documented, their possible biological impacts are what are of most interest to fisherman.

Zebra mussels spread by spawning large numbers of larvae called veligers. Spawning is determined by water temperature, with a peak in April to early June and another in October to early December. By the following spring, they can be 1/2-inch to 3/4 inch long.

Zebra mussels filter large quantities of water to feed on phytoplankton (microscopic floating plants). One mussel can filter up to 72 cubic inches of water an hour. Concentrations of zebra mussels can be as great as 37,000 per square yard. A recent

study model showed that a 200 acre lake with such a zebra mussel infestation on 20 acres, could have all of its water filtered by the mussels in a half of a day.

While actual filtration levels are somewhat lower, zebra mussels can filter out large quantities of phytoplankton, the basis for much of the aquatic food chain. Other impacts include increased water clarity, increased growth of bottom plants and stringy filamentous bottom algae, and lowered oxygen levels. Dense concentrations of zebra mussels both use a great deal of oxygen and also filter out oxygen-producing phytoplankton.

Most research has been done in the northern United States. A detailed ecological modeling study of the impacts of zebra mussels was recently done in Green Bay of Lake Michigan. The study noted that zebra mussels will filter out more phytoplankton than they can eat. What they don't eat, they expel from their shells in small pellets which sink to the bottom.

In spite of removing enough phytoplankton of the larger-sized species from the water to make it clearer, the numbers of the smaller phytoplankton species stays relatively high. These smaller-sized species are the ones preferred as food by zooplankton (microscopic animals) which are in turn eaten by fish. The model predicts that impacts on food webs will be lowest in least fertile waters and highest in the most fertile waters, such as we have in Louisiana.

According to Thompson, few ecological changes have been noted in Louisiana yet. Populations of larger zebra mussels seem to be somewhat controlled by our warm summertime water temperatures. When water temperatures reach 86° F, most zebra mussels over six-tenths of an inch long die. The smaller animals seem to be more tolerant and usually make it through the summer.

According to Thompson, population levels in Louisiana are at about the same level that they were last year. Also, states Thompson, "No information shows anything to indicate settlement of zebra mussel larvae from the 1997 Bonnet Carre Spillway opening."

Thompson has noted that some freshwater fish are feeding on zebra mussels, including gaspergou, redear sunfish (lake runners), and most especially, blue catfish.

### **Hooked Mussels**

Hooked mussels are brownish-black in color and can grow up to 2 inches long. They are native to low salinity brackish waters of Louisiana. Some hooked mussels have always settled out on oysters, but in recent years their numbers have dramatically increased, actually making some oyster beds not worth harvesting. Like zebra mussels, hooked mussels attach to hard surfaces with byssal threads.

Besides making oysters hard to work, research has shown that large numbers of hooked mussels on an oyster will compete with the oyster for food, and cause the oyster to grow a long narrow shell and have poor meat condition. Dr. Earl Melancon of Nicholls State University speculates that high hooked mussel numbers are due to Louisiana currently being in a wet cycle, producing low salinities in our estuaries.

Research seems to indicate that hooked mussels are more common in lower salinities because their heaviest predators, stone crabs, oyster drills (conchs), and black drum, prefer to live in higher salinities. On the other hand, freshwater or very low salinities will kill them.

Very little research has been done on this pest species, although Melancon is currently planning a project.

Sources: *Zebra Mussel Research Technical Notes*. ZMR-1-33, ZMR-1-34 and ZMR-2-07. U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. 1998. *Zebra Mussel Newsletter*. Vol. 4, No. 2. Louisiana Sea Grant and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. *Predicting the Consequences of Dreissenid Mussels on a Pelagic Food Web*. D. Padilla, S. Adolph, K. Cottingham, and D. Schneider. Ecological Modeling 85. 1996. *Hooked Mussel Fouling*. K. Brown. Louisiana Oyster Industry Convention and Gulf Oyster Initiative Workshop. 1998. Personal communications : Bruce Thompson, Louisiana State University, Earl Melancon, Nicholls State University, John Supan, Louisiana State University.

## **B.R.D. REGULATIONS FOR OFFSHORE TRAWLS**

Effective May 14, 1998, shrimp trawls that are rigged for fishing in **federal waters** out to 100 fathoms, from Cape San Blas, Florida to the Texas/Mexico border will have to have a certified bycatch reduction device (BRD) installed. A trawl is considered rigged for fishing if it is in the water or connected in any way to a door, sled or other spreading device or in attached to any type of rope, cable or other connector.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is in the process of mailing BRD installation instructions to each licensed shrimper in the Gulf States. Certified BRDs include the Fisheye in several positions and the Jones/Davis device.

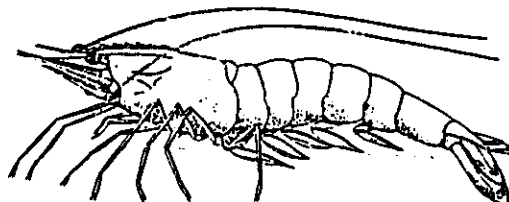
The following trawls are exempt from BRD regulations:

- \* Groundfish and butterfish trawls
- \* Royal red shrimp trawls (90% of the shrimp on the vessel must be royal reds)
- \* Try nets of 16 feet or less
- \* Rigid-frame roller trawls 16 feet or less in length.



BRDs are required in shrimp trawls because according to NMFS, the stock of red snappers in the Gulf of Mexico will not recover from overfishing by the target date of 2019 without bycatch reduction. According to NMFS, about 88% of the red snapper population is removed by shrimp trawls.

NMFS estimates average earnings per shrimp vessel in the Gulf of only \$6,564 per year. The range of earnings is from \$2,249 to \$42,881 per year. These figures are after expenses, but before taxes. NMFS estimates that requiring shrimpers to use Fisheye BRDs



will cause a 3% loss in shrimp catch and about a 5% increase in operating costs. NMFS estimates that between 9 and 240 full-time shrimp vessels will be forced out of business because of BRD requirements.

BRD requirements will cost the shrimp industry a \$117 million long-term loss. NMFS estimates mandatory BRD use will produce \$118 million in net benefits to the commercial red snapper fishery if they are managed under an individual transferable quota (ITQ) system (Unfortunately Congress has suspended the use of ITQs for fisheries management). Without ITQs, benefits to the red snapper industry would be \$35 million less.

The Social Impact Assessment (SIA) associated with BRD regulations found that shrimpers are experiencing high work-related stress due to many factors, including the required use of TEDs. The SIA concluded that requiring the use of BRDs would increase their stress levels. The SIA also found that if BRD use reduces fishermen's workload because of having to cull less finfish from the catch, then stress levels may decrease.

Source: Federal Register: April 14, 1998 (Volume 63, Number 71).

### **RED SNAPPER LIMIT LOWERED**

In the same announcement that bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) are required for shrimp trawls, the recreational bag limit for red snapper in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico was reduced from 5 to 4 fish, effective immediately. The intent of the reduction is to reduce the possibility of a recreational season closure as happened in November, 1997.

Currently, the Gulf red snapper quota is 9.12 million pounds. This is at least 3 million pounds over the Gulf Council Stock Assessment Panel's recommendation. If the catch quota stays at 9.12 million pounds, the National Marine Fisheries Service projects that a 5 fish limit would force a closure between mid October and mid December. With a 4 fish limit, no closure is forecast.

If the catch quota was lowered to 6 million pounds as the Stock Assessment Panel recommends, the closure scenario is as follows:

<u>Limit</u>	<u>Projected Recreational Closure</u>
5 fish	Mid to late August
4 fish	Mid September to early October
3 fish	Late October to late November
2 fish	No closure

A possibility also exists of dropping bag limits of red snapper for charter boat captains and crew to zero to help avoid a closure.

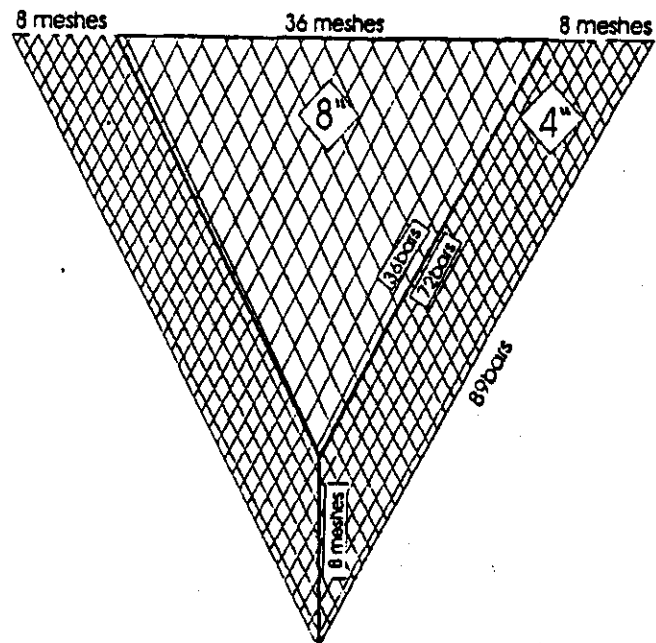
Source: Gulf Fishery News. Volume 20, No. 1 & 2.

### NEW SOFT T.E.D. APPROVED

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has approved, for an 18-month trial period, use of the new Parker soft TED. Soft TEDs were outlawed in 1997 because NMFS suspected the loose webbing in soft TEDs of entangling sea turtles and causing them to drown.

The Parker soft TED does not use the slack, large mesh webbing that is known to cause turtle entanglements in previously approved soft TEDs. Instead, the Parker soft TED consists of a single triangular panel, composed of webbing of two different mesh sizes, that form a barrier for turtles inside a trawl and that angles toward an escape opening in the top of the trawl. The Parker soft TED was tested in a variety of trawl sizes and styles. During testing, the Parker TED successfully excluded 100 percent of the turtles introduced into the trawl, and is especially adaptable under certain environmental conditions. Shrimp loss was approximately 9 percent.

The Parker soft TED cannot be used in a two seam trawl with a bib or a trawl with a bib and tongue. It may be used in any other trawl if the taper of the body panels of the trawl is **not over 4 bar and 1 point**. Anyone interested in construction and installation instructions for the Parker soft TED may call, write or come by my office in Marrero.



## **N.M.F.S. OFFERS HELP TO NET SHOPS**

The National Marine Fisheries Service is offering to hold workshops for net shop owners on how to properly install the Jones/Davis BRD and the Parker soft TED. Any net shop owners interested in attending such a workshop may call my office in Marrero.

## **OYSTER LICENSE SURVEY**

Dr. Forrest Deseran of Louisiana State University will be conducting a survey of the concerns and needs of oyster license holders in the near future. A percentage of the people holding oyster licenses will receive a letter, which will be followed by a telephone call.

According to Deseran, the survey is being conducted because the opinions and knowledge of oyster harvesters are crucial for people to understand the problems facing the industry. He states "Without a clear ideas of what oyster harvesters need, sensible and effective programs and legislation will be difficult to formulate. Our research provides an opportunity for your concerns to be voiced."

Participation in the survey is voluntary and each person's responses are confidential. The overall results of this research will be made available to members of the oyster industry, officials and representatives of state government, and interested citizens.

Deseran recently conducted a survey similar to this with the shrimp industry. The results have been most useful to managers trying to better understand the needs of shrimpers.

## **BIG CHANGES FOR MACKEREL**

Over 20 changes in coastal migratory pelagic fish management have been announced by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The most detailed changes concern limited entry for commercial king mackerel fishermen, so I will start with those.

### **King Mackerel Limited Entry**

**Earned Income Requirement for Mackerel Permits - At least 25 percent of an applicant's earned income, or at least \$10,000, must have been derived from commercial fishing (harvest and first sale of fish), or from charter fishing, during one of the three calendar years preceding the application. These revised income requirements will be completely implemented by April 20, 1999. To obtain or renew a commercial king or Spanish mackerel permit prior to that date, at least 10 percent of an applicant's earned income must have been derived from commercial fishing during one of the three calendar years preceding the application. The implementation period from**

March 4, 1998 through April 30, 1999, will allow almost 14 months for applicants and renewals to meet the revised earned income requirements.

**Moratorium on Commercial Permits for King Mackerel - Beginning March 4, 1998, NMFS will issue (renew) a commercial king mackerel permit only if the applicant was the owner of a vessel for which a commercial mackerel permit was issued prior to October 16, 1995.** A permit for a vessel not meeting this moratorium criterion will be renewed only through April 30, 1999, provided the owner or an operator meet the earned income requirements. The moratorium will remain in effect through October 15, 2000.

A 90-day window is now in effect for the reactivation of expired commercial mackerel permits. An owner or operator who allowed a commercial mackerel permit to expire will have until June 2, 1998, to submit an application for renewal to the NMFS Regional Administrator. The application, must be postmarked or hand delivered not later than that date. The awarding of permits to these applicants will be based on the criteria established under the moratorium and the fishery management plan. No owner will be issued more initial commercial vessel permits for king mackerel than he held simultaneously at any given time on or before October 16, 1995. Also, an owner of a vessel issued a permit on or before that date and sold after that date retains the right to the commercial king mackerel permit, unless a written agreement has transferred such rights to the new owner. **After June 2, 1998, NMFS will not accept any application other than renewals for a commercial king mackerel permit. Further, NMFS will not reissue a commercial king mackerel permit if it has been revoked or if the renewal application is received by the Regional Administrator more than one year after the permit's expiration date.**

Commercial king mackerel permits may be transferred during the moratorium under established regulatory criteria. A permit may be transferred to another vessel owned by the same entity. An owner who is the income qualifier for a permit also may request NMFS to transfer such permit to the new owner of the vessel upon sale or transfer, or to the owner of another vessel. The recipient may renew the permit through April 15 following the first full calendar year (January - December) after transfer without meeting the earned income requirements. However, further renewal requires the vessel owner to meet the earned income requirements no later than the first calendar year after the permit transfer. The owner of a vessel with a permit that was issued based on the operator's income and is only valid when such operator is aboard may request NMFS to transfer the permit to that operator when such operator becomes an owner of a vessel.

### **Other Changes**

The only authorized gear for king mackerel in Gulf federal waters is hook and line and run-around gillnet (with a minimum mesh size of 4 3/4 inches stretched). No king mackerel may be possessed on vessels with a drift gillnet or long gillnet (one over 1000 yards long). King mackerel may be possessed during open season on vessels with other

types of unauthorized gear (such as shrimp trawls), as long as the gear is not used to directly fish for king mackerel. This would allow a shrimp trawler who also holds a mackerel permit to fish for both species in one trip.

A recreational limit of cobia, king and Spanish mackerel may be taken as incidental catch with any gear except a drift gillnet or a long gillnet. For dolphins, cero, bluefish, and little tunny (commonly called bonita in the Gulf), all gear is considered authorized except drift, gillnets and long gillnets.

Finally, some major changes were made in the fishery management plan for these species.

- \* Allows the eastern and western Gulf of Mexico king mackerel subgroups to be combined when enough scientific information is available. Currently regulations off of Florida (eastern subgroup) are quite different than off of Louisiana (western subgroup).
- \* Adds the ability to change overfishing levels, recommend more gear restrictions, **recommend zero quotas and bag limits**, recommend the closure of spawning seasons and areas, and recommend reopening of closed seasons or areas.

The target management level for the management for king mackerel in the Gulf is set at 30% SPR.

### **EXOTIC DISEASE FOUND IN WILD SHRIMP IN TEXAS**

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) has reported the first confirmed occurrence of a shrimp disease known as "White Spot" in a native shrimp found near Brownsville. Concern has been expressed for some time about the possibility of exotic diseases from non-native shrimp on shrimp farms being transferred to native brown, white and pink shrimp populations. White Spot virus has been found twice before in shrimp culture facilities but never in wild shrimp.

TPWD biologist Larry McKinney cautions that so far only one wild shrimp has been found with the disease, so the situation is not a crisis. TPWD will continue to monitor wild shrimp populations.

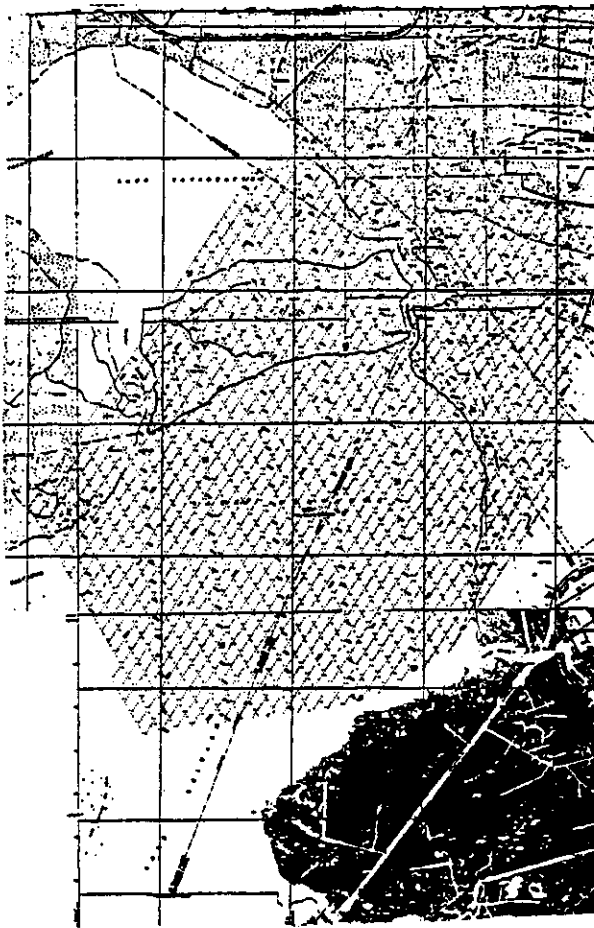
### **OYSTER LEASE MORATORIUM EXTENDED**

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission has announced a decision to extend the moratorium for taking oyster lease applications through July 12, 1998. On or before July 6, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries will announce the exact time and place that applications will be taken on July 13.

Only one applicant at a time will be allowed into the office and this applicant will be allowed to make only one application. Applicants will have 15 minutes to designate the area they wish to apply for. After applicants pay the application and survey fees they may return to the end of the line for another application.

Any bona fide resident or corporation authorized to do business with the state may apply for an oyster lease.

### **CATAOUACHE/SALVADOR SEISMOGRAPH WORK**



Fishermen should be aware that intensive seismograph work will soon begin in the area of Lakes Cataouache and Salvador. The area to be surveyed is the shaded area in the map on the left. Approximately 30 airboats will be working out of the Pier 90 Launch off of Highway 90.

As this area is also heavily fished, conflicts may possibly occur. Good communication between fishermen and the seismograph company should reduce problems. George Newport with Weems Geophysical (504/785-1125) is the person fishermen may contact if they have a problem. Fishermen may also call Larry LeBlanc with the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Seismic Section. His pager number is 504/930-6449.

Fishermen are also welcome to attend the seismograph operator daily field meetings at 6:30 am each morning at the Comfort Inn Hotel in Boutte.

Wetland and waterbottom damage may be reported by calling Heather Warner Finley with the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, 504/765-2394, or Karl Morgan with the Department of Natural Resources, 504/342-7591.

### **NEW SIZE LIMITS FOR MARLINS**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has announced a change in the minimum size limits for blue and white marlin in the Atlantic Ocean, including the Gulf of

Mexico. The new minimum sizes are 96 inches for blue marlin and 66 inches for white marlin. Marlins are measured from the tip of the lower jaw to the fork in the tail.

Both species were identified as overfished by NMFS in September, 1997. Currently, only recreational landings of billfish are allowed for U. S. fishermen. All commercial bycatch must be released at sea.

This regulatory action also requires mandatory registration of all Atlantic highly migratory species tournaments. Those people conducting a tournament involving score keeping or awards for Atlantic highly migratory species (whether or not retained), must register their tournament with the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center: Attn: "Tournament Registration", 75 Virginia Beach Drive, Miami, FL 33149. The registration must be in writing, at least four weeks before the tournament. A tournament registration form is available upon request from the above address or can be requested by FAX (305-361-4129).

Some tournament operators will be selected by NMFS managers to submit a record of catch and effort to the agency. If selected, tournament operators are required under the Magnuson-Stevens Act to report the information to NMFS. Completed forms must be submitted to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, attn: Eric Prince, postmarked not later than the seventh day after the end of the tournament, and must be accompanied by a copy of the tournament rules.

For further information about the new requirements, contact Buck Sutter (813-570-5447).

### **NEW I.R.S. REPORTING REQUIREMENT**

Congress recently passed a new law that requires the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to enforce new record-keeping procedures for seafood buyers. The law is not complex but has some specific requirements.

The law requires that beginning January 1, 1998, that any person in the business of buying fish for resale and who purchases fish by cash from any commercial fishermen must keep records showing the date of purchase, the fisherman's name, address, and Tax Payer Identification Number (for most fishermen this is his social security number).

Also the amount of the cash purchase for each and every purchase must be recorded.

Cash is defined as U. S. or foreign coin or currency, a cashier's check, treasurer's check, bank draft, traveler's check, or money order. Basically, this is everything but a check written from the business or personal account of the buyer.

Fish is defined to include finfish, shellfish (such as oysters), crustaceans (such as crabs and shrimp), and "other forms of aquatic life." According to Joe Bruchis, District Director's Representative with the IRS, this definition includes alligators, frogs and turtles and can even include nutria.

Beginning January 1, 1999, fish purchasers must go through their records and send each person that they purchased more than \$600 worth of fish in cash from, a Form 1099-Misc. By February 15, the purchaser must file the form 1099-Misc. with the IRS Service Center. Obviously good records are very important.

Anyone with questions on this program may call Joe Bruchis at (504) 876-6680 in Houma.

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### THE GUMBO POT

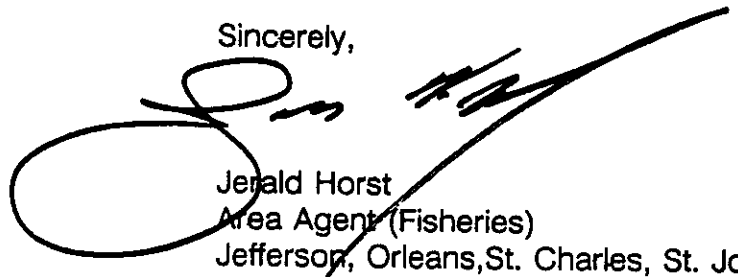
This month's recipe compliments any entree nicely as a dinner salad. With hot garlic bread, it can also be served as an entree itself for 3 people.

#### Hot Crawfish Spinach Salad

12	oz fresh spinach	1	tblsp prepared mustard
3/4	cup mushrooms, sliced	1/4	cup wine vinegar
1	12 oz package crawfish tails	1/8	tsp cayenne pepper
	juice from 1/2 lemon	1/4	tsp black pepper
1/2	cup vegetable oil	1/2	tsp salt
1	small onion, chopped	1/3	cup bottled raspberry walnut
3	cloves garlic, minced		vinaigrette dressing
		1	tomato, coarsely cubed

Tear spinach into bite-sized pieces. Add mushrooms and set aside. Mix lemon juice with crawfish tails in colander. Heat oil in small sauce pan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic. Saute until tender. Whisk in mustard, vinegar, red and black pepper, and salt. Add crawfish and warm through. Add raspberry walnut vinaigrette dressing. Pour mixture over spinach and add tomatoes. Serves 6 as a dinner salad.

Sincerely,



Jerald Horst  
Area Agent (Fisheries)  
Jefferson, Orleans, St. Charles, St. John